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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
(2014 - 2015)**

(SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Forty-fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject "Working of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas".

NINTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March, 2015/Phalguna, 1936(Saka)

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 13.3.2015

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 13.3.2015



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March, 2015/Phalguna, 1936(Saka)

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (2014-2015)**

SHRI RAMESH BAIS - CHAIRMAN

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Jasvantsinh Sumanbhai Bhabhor
3. Kunwar Bharatendra
4. Shri Dilip Singh Bhuria
5. Shri Santokh Singh Chaudhary
- #6. Shri Sher Singh Ghubaya
7. Shri Jhina Hikaka
8. Shri Prakash Babanna Hukkeri
9. Shri Bhagwant Khuba
10. Shri Sadashiv Lokhande
11. Smt. Maragatham K.
12. Shri Kariya Munda
13. Prof. A.S.R. Naik
14. Shri Asaduddin Owaisi
15. Sadhvi Savitri Bai Phule
16. Dr. Udit Raj
17. Smt. Satabdi Roy
18. Prof. Sadhu Singh
19. Smt. Neelam Sonkar
- #20. Smt. Mamta Thakur
- *21. Shri Tejpratap Singh Yadav

**MEMBERS
RAJYA SABHA**

22. Smt. Jharna Das Baidya
- **23. Dr. Tazeen Fatma
24. Shri Ahamed Hassan
25. Smt. Sarojini Hembram
26. Shri Prabhat Jha
27. Smt. Mohsina Kidwai
28. Shri Praveen Rashtrapal
29. Shri Nand Kumar Sai
30. Smt. Vijila Sathyananth
31. Smt. Wansuk Syiem

* Nominated w.e.f. 22.12.2014

** Nominated w.e.f. 29.1.2015

Nominated w.e.f. 25.3.2015

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Ashok Kumar Singh - Joint Secretary
2. Shri Ashok Sajwan - Director
3. Shri Kushal Sarkar - Additional Director
4. Shri Yash Pal Sharma - Senior Executive Assistant

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2014-15) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, do present this Ninth Report on the action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Forty-fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject “Working of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas”.

2. The Forty-fourth Report was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 18th February, 2014. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs furnished their replies indicating action taken on the recommendations contained in that Report on 19th May, 2014. The Report was considered and adopted by the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment at their sitting held on 10th March, 2015.

3. An analysis of the action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Forty-fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) is given in Appendix.

4. For facility of reference observations/recommendations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report.

NEW DELHI;

10 March, 2015
19 Phalgun, 1936 (Saka)

RAMESH BAIS
Chairman,
Standing Committee on
Social Justice and
Empowerment

CHAPTER I

REPORT

1.1 This Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment deals with the action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in Forty-fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject “Working of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas” relating to Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

1.2 The Forty-fourth Report was presented to Lok Sabha and was laid in Rajya Sabha on 18th February, 2014. It contained 21 recommendations. Replies of Government in respect of all the recommendations have been received and are categorized as under:

- (i) Observations/Recommendations, which have been accepted by the Government :

Sl. Nos. 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 19, 20 and 21
(Total 9 – Chapter II)
- (ii) Observations/Recommendations which the committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government : Nil

(Nil - Chapter III)
- (iii) Observations/Recommendations, in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted :

Sl. Nos. 3 and 5

(Total 2 – Chapter IV)
- (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are interim in nature :

Sl. Nos. 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17 and 18

(Total 10 – Chapter V)

1.3 The Committee desire that action taken notes on the recommendations contained in Chapter-I and final action taken notes in respect of the recommendations contained in Chapter-V of this Report may be furnished to them at the earliest and in any cases not later than three months of the presentation of the Report.

1.4 The committee will now deal with some of the replies received from the Government which need reiteration or merit comments.

A. Need for Ashram School data, State-wise

Recommendation (Sl. No. 3, Para No. 3)

1.5 The Committee noted that Ashram School in tribal areas run by State Governments across the country are playing a crucial role in imparting elementary education to tribal students. As informed by the Ministry, the concerned State Governments/UT administrations are responsible for general functioning of schools including teachers' recruitment, students, enrollment, syllabus, affiliation to education board, management of dropout rate, etc. The Committee had, however, been informed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development that with the notification of RTE Act, Ashram Schools also come under its purview and have to follow the prescribed norms of standards. The Committee were, however, constrained to note that neither the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) nor the Ministry of Tribal Affairs have the information about the number of Schools functioning in various States. The Committee therefore, felt that with the promulgation of RTE Act, it has become incumbent on both the Central and State Governments to collect data state-wise about the number of tribal schools and to ensure observance of prescribed

norms for the Ashram Schools. The Committee, therefore, recommended that the Government should closely watch and review the prescribed norms of standards being followed by the States for Ashram Schools, collect and maintain year-wise and state-wise data on Ashram Schools and, in case of any shortcomings, exhort the concerned states to take necessary corrective action.

1.6 The Ministry of Tribal Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under :-

"The Ashram Schools up to the elementary level opened with financial support from this Ministry and State Governments/UT Administrations are Government Schools and come under the purview of RTE Act 2009. Therefore, these Ashram Schools need to ensure observance of the prescribed RTE norms.

This Ministry was formed in 1999 after the bifurcation of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The data on Ashram Schools sanctioned prior to this date was not available. However, This Ministry has now collected the information from States and based on the available data the State-wise No. of Ashram Schools opened with support from this Ministry and State Government is given below :-

State/UT	No. of Ashram Schools		
	MoTA supported	State supported	Total
A & N Islands	NA	NA	NA
Andhra Pradesh	246	336	582
Assam	1	NA	1
Bihar	0	5	5
Chhattisgarh	351	122	473
D&D	NA	NA	NA
D&NH	NA	NA	NA
Goa	1	0	1
Gujarat	164	0	164
Himachal Pradesh	24	0	24
Jammu & Kashmir	NA	NA	NA
Jharkhand	2	NA	2
Karnataka	19	5	24
Kerala	11	NA	11
Maharashtra	254	298	552
Manipur	0	5	5
Meghalaya	NA	NA	NA
Mizoram	NA	NA	NA
Madhya Pradesh	414	254	668
Nagaland	NA	NA	NA
Odisha	97	255	352
Rajasthan	9	0	9
Sikkim	8	0	8
Tamil Nadu	NA	NA	NA
Tripura	25	4	29
Uttar Pradesh	2	NA	2
Uttarakhand	12	NA	12
WB	NA	NA	NA
Total	1640	1284	2924

The data from the States shown with NA are still awaited. These States will be requested to furnish the information, so that the complete data on Ashram Schools will be available with this Ministry".

1.7 The Committee are unhappy to note that the Ministry till date do not have the complete data about the total number of Ashram Schools in States/UTs as according to them the requisite information is awaited from some of the States/UTs. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and desire the Ministry to pursue the matter vigorously with the State Governments/UTs and obtain the desired information without further delay.

B. Proposal for Construction of Ashram Schools

Recommendation (Sl. No. 5, Para No. 5)

1.8 The Committee regretted to note that the Ministry was unable to furnish the number of proposals received by them for setting up of Ashram Schools across the States and Union Territories during the last three years and the proposal approved/pending as on date, State-wise. The Committee did not accept the plea of the Ministry that the receipt of proposal from States/UT Administrations in Tribal Sub Plan Areas is a continuous and ongoing process and Central Assistance is released to the States/UTs based on the proposals, complete in all respects, received from them and are subject to availability of funds in a particular financial year. In order to bring greater transparency and efficiency, the Committee recommended that the Ministry furnish a detailed statement on the number of proposals received, rejected, approved and those pending, with reasons therefore, State-wise during the last three years. This may be done within three months of the presentation of this Report.

1.9 The Ministry of Tribal Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under :-

"A detailed statement on the number of proposal for opening of Ashram Schools in TSP areas received, rejected, approved and those pending with reasons therefore, State-wise during the last three years from 2010-11 to 2012-13 is being prepared and will be submitted within the stipulated period".

1.10 In order to bring greater transparency and efficiency, the Committee recommended the Ministry to furnish a detailed statement on the number of proposals received, rejected, approved and those pending, with reasons therefor, State-wise during the last three years. The Committee are dismayed to note from the reply of the Ministry that the said detailed statement has still not been prepared and desire the Ministry to furnish the said statement without further loss of time.

C. Umbrella Scheme for education of ST children

Recommendation (Sl. No. 9, Para No. 9)

1.11 The Committee observed that Grant-in-aid under the scheme is released only for construction of school buildings and the maintenance and running of the Ashram Schools is the responsibility of the State Government/UT Administration concerned. The Committee also observed that during the course of periodic review meetings held with Secretaries/Commissioners of the Tribal Welfare Departments of State Government/UT Administrations it had come to notice that States face problems in maintaining and running of the Ashram Schools for want of sufficient funds. The Ministry had also informed that with a view to addressing this problem, among other things, the Ministry had proposed an umbrella Scheme for the education of Scheduled Tribes children for 12th Plan period through which more funds are proposed to be made available to the States/Union Territories for suitably upgrading the Ashram Schools and bringing about quality change in their functioning. The committee noted that under the proposed Umbrella Scheme, Rs. 5935.18 crore had been projected as Central share for the 12th plan period. On the status of the approval of the Umbrella Scheme, the Ministry apprised the Committee that the Planning Commission had supported the proposal and the EFC memorandum was being revised in the light of comments of various Ministries/Departments after which proposal for convening EFC meeting would be sent to the Departments of Expenditure. The Committee urged the Ministry to get the scheme approved without loss of further time so that the Umbrella Scheme could be implemented during the current fiscal itself to strengthen the States financially as well as to ensure smooth running and maintenance of Ashram Schools.

Reply of the Government

1.12 The Ministry of Tribal Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under :-

The EFC approval for the proposed Umbrella Scheme has been obtained. Since the total amount available for the XII Plan under the budget provision for the Scheme to be merged was Rs.5071.86 crore, the revised outlay for the Scheme has been restricted to the total amount available in XII Plan Budget of Rs.5071.86 crore.

The Cabinet approval for the Umbrella Scheme will be obtained immediately after the removal of Model Code of Conduct. However, the proposal for the AWP&B for 2014-15 will be obtained from the States well in advance, so that the Scheme can be implemented during the current fiscal itself.

1.13 The Committee in their earlier recommendation urged the Ministry to get the Umbrella Scheme approved without loss of further time so that it can be implemented during the current fiscal itself to strengthen the States financially as well as to ensure smooth running and maintenance of Ashram Schools. Now, the Ministry have stated that the EFC approval for the proposed Umbrella Scheme has been obtained and the Cabinet approval will be obtained immediately after the removal of Model Code of Conduct. The Committee desire to know whether Umbrella Scheme has since been approved by the Cabinet and the further action taken to implement the same.

D. Need for supplying quality food

Recommendation (Sl. No. 12, Para No. 12)

1.14 During their Study visits, it was brought to the notice of the Committee that sub-standard food was being provided to the students in some of the Ashram Schools and that personal care products of inferior quality were being provided to the students. Though, the Principal Secretary, Tribal Welfare Department, Maharashtra assured the Committee that he would look into the matter, the Committee had recommended that the Ministry should impress upon all the State Governments to take such complaints seriously and conduct appropriate enquiries in this regard. Also, keeping in view the sub-standard food and bad quality of personal care products being provided to the students in Ashram Schools, the Committee recommended that the Ministry should ensure strict compliance of the standards laid down under the Right to Education Act.

1.15 The Ministry of Tribal Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under :-

"The States are being requested to provide good food and quality personal care products to Tribal children in Ashram Schools and Hostels. The States will be impressed to deal with complaints seriously and conduct appropriate enquiries regarding supply of substandard food and other personal care products of inferior quality".

1.16 keeping in view the sub-standard food and bad quality of personal care products being provided to the students in Ashram Schools, the Committee had recommended that the Ministry should impress upon all the State Governments to take such complaints seriously and conduct appropriate enquiries in this regard and also to ensure strict compliance of the standards laid down under the Right to Education Act. The Ministry have stated that the States are being requested to provide good food and quality of personal care products to Tribal children in Ashram Schools and Hostels and will also be impressed upon to deal with complaints seriously and conduct appropriate enquiries. The Committee may be apprised of the remedial measures taken in the matter so far.

E. Death of ST children in Ashram Schools

Recommendation (Sl. No. 13, Para No. 13)

1.17 The Committee were shocked to note during the Study Visit that 793 children died in Ashram Schools in Maharashtra from the year 2001-2002 to 2012-2013 due to snake bites, scorpion bites, fever and minor illness. The Committee were apprised that the State Government conducted a total of 609 primary enquiries and as a result thereof, 74 employees were suspended, departmental enquiry initiated against 28 employees, show cause notice were issued to 39 employees and 99 were given Memorandum, warning, etc. The Committee also noted that 453 parents were given ex-gratia payment while 340 parents are yet to be disbursed the ex-gratia amount. The Committee were not satisfied with the action as it is a clear case of criminal neglect on the part of schools' authorities in not ensuring timely treatment for the tribal children which could have saved their precious lives. The Committee, therefore, recommended that (a) the Ministry call for a detailed report from all the States concerned in this regard and that necessary corrective and punitive measures are taken; (b) all possible steps, including periodical health check-up of students and making adequate arrangements for first-aid facilities in each Ashram Schools, should be taken to prevent recurrence of such incidents; (c) the teachers and staff residing in the school campus should be trained to administer first aid for snake/scorpion bites in areas infested with them so as to prevent deaths on this count; and (d) ex-gratia payment may be disbursed to the remaining families expeditiously.

1.18 The Ministry of Tribal Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under :-

"Necessary guidelines are being issued to all States for prevention of such incidences and all States are being requested to furnish a detailed report on the death of tribal children in Ashram Schools as recommended by the Committee".

1.19 The Committee, in their earlier recommendation, had expressed serious concern over the death of 793 children in Ashram Schools in Maharashtra from the year 2001-2002 to 2012-2013 due to snake bites, scorpion bites, fever and minor illness. The Committee had also noted that 453 parents were given ex-gratia payment while 340 parents were yet to be disbursed the ex-gratia amount. The Committee had, therefore, recommended that the Ministry call for a detailed report from all the States concerned in this regard and take necessary corrective and punitive measures, including periodical health check-up of students and making adequate arrangements for first-aid facilities in each Ashram Schools, to prevent recurrence of such incidents, training of the teachers and staff residing in the school campus to administer first aid for snake/scorpion bites in areas infested with them so as to prevent deaths on this count and disbursement of ex-gratia payment to the remaining families expeditiously. The Ministry in their reply have merely informed that necessary guidelines are being issued to all States for prevention of such incidences and to furnish a detailed report on the death of tribal children in Ashram Schools. The Committee would like to be apprised of the guidelines issued to the State Governments/UTs alongwith the status of ex-gratia payment disbursed to remaining families.

F. HRD Report on STs

Recommendation (Sl. No. 19, Para No. 19)

1.20 The Committee observed that a Sub-Committee of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) was constituted under the Chairmanship of Prof. Thorat on educational requirements of STs. The Committee were dismayed to note that the findings of the above Report were yet to be obtained from the Ministry of HRD. The Committee, therefore, urged the Ministry to make available the findings of the Thorat Committee Report and implement its recommendations/suggestions for the better functioning of the Ashram Schools.

1.21 The Ministry of Tribal Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under :-

"The findings, recommendations and suggestions of the report of Prof. Thorat Committee is being analyzed and the same will be implemented in co-ordination with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD)".

1.22 The Committee urged the Ministry to implement the recommendations/suggestions of the Prof. Thorat Committee Report on educational requirements of STs for the better functioning of the Ashram Schools. The Ministry have informed that the findings, recommendations and suggestions of the above Report are being analyzed and the same will be implemented in co-ordination with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD). The Committee desire the Ministry to expedite the matter in co-ordination with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) and take necessary steps to implement the Prof. Thorat Committee recommendations/suggestions for the better functioning of the Ashram Schools.

CHAPTER II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Sl. No. 1, Para No. 1)

2.1 Integrated plan of action for bringing STs at par with other groups:

The Committee observe that education has been recognized as key to bringing social economic development of the country and also to level out disparities in opportunities for marginalized group with the general population. Therefore, educational development of STs, which are the lowest in various socio-economic parameters, has been accorded priority in the National Policy of Education, 1986 and Programmes for Action Plan 1992. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan initiated to meet Constitutional commitments to ensure free and compulsory elementary education for all children between the ages of 6 and 14 years had a special focus on education of tribal children. The Committee, however, note with concern that despite several campaigns to promote educational development of the Scheduled Tribes since independence, the literacy rates among the STs vis-a-vis India average continue to show wide gap. Though the overall literacy gap amongst various groups and STs has come down from 19.77% to 14.03%, a scrutiny of State-wise literacy data reveals that in most of the north eastern States Viz. Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland, STs are at par with the general population, whereas in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal which have sizeable ST population in remote areas, the literacy gap is still as high as 18 to 26 percent. The Committee exhort the Government to view the large disparity in literacy rates of STs in these States which have lagged in almost all socio-economic parameters, with all seriousness and promote educational development for STs in these States on a mission mode which alone has the potential to open flood gates for development of the STs.

Reply of the Government

2.2 Despite Government initiatives and efforts to promote education among STs, The literacy rates among STs as compared to national average has

remained low and the female literacy rate has been still lower compared to national literacy rate. The literacy rate as per Census 2011 is 73% for the total population in India, but literacy rate for STs is 59% only. The overall literacy gap amongst the various groups and STs has come down from 19.77% in 1961 to 14.03% in 2011. The gap in literacy rate of STs as per Census 2011 in respect of the following States are indicated against each:

State	Literacy Rate Total %	Literacy Rate STs %	Gap %
Madhya Pradesh	69.32	50.55	18.77
Maharashtra	82.34	65.73	16.61
Odisha	72.87	52.24	20.63
Tamil Nadu	80.09	54.34	25.75
West Bengal	76.26	57.93	18.33

The Umbrella Scheme designed by this Ministry aims inter-alia to promote educational development for STs in all TSP areas and improve the quality of education of tribal children, thus reducing the literacy gap.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 7, Para No. 7)

2.3 Funding pattern of Ashram School in Tribal Sub Plan Areas: The Committee observe that under the scheme of Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Area, State Governments are eligible for 100% central share for construction of all Girls, Ashram Schools and also for construction of Boys, Ashram Schools in naxal affected areas. The funding pattern for the other Boys, Ashram Schools to State Governments is on 50:50 basis. The Ministry apprised the committee that the limited financial resources/budget outlay of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs do not allow extension of 100% funding for Ashram Schools except critical areas such as Naxalite affected areas and Ashram School for Girls. It is well accepted that the tribal community in India in general is one of the most backward and vulnerable sections of the society and Ashram Schools play a pivotal role in imparting basic education to tribal students, which is the very

essence of tribal upliftment. Since most of the states are facing crunch and they are not coming forward with proposals, the Committee urge the Ministry to amend the existing scheme guidelines for grant of 100% funding in all the boys Ashram Schools in non-naxal affected areas as well, waiving of the 50% share clause of the States. This should also be in respect of non-recurring items of expenditure, purchase of equipment, furniture and furnishing, purchase of few sets of books for a small library for use of inmates of the hostels etc. The Committee feel the avowed principle of inclusive growth and the compelling case of moral equity, will remain a mere shibboleth unless the Government eradicates illiteracy and malnourishment among the tribals.

Reply of the Government

2.4 A revised funding pattern in Ashram Schools in TSP areas is proposed in the Umbrella Scheme for education of tribal children. Accordingly, the funds will be shared at the ratio of 75:25 between Center and State Government and 90:10 for the North-Eastern States and special category States of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand from the year 2014-15 onwards. This revised funding pattern will give the States some financial relief.

Under the Umbrella Scheme, the following interventions are proposed:

- I. **Ashram schools**
 - a. Opening of New Ashram Schools
 - b. Up-gradation of Ashram Schools established with the Ministry's support
 - c. Support to complete construction of already sanctioned Ashram Schools
 - d. Norms applicable for all infrastructure support
 - e. Additional Teachers in Ashram schools
 - f. Non Teaching Staff – only for Secondary/ Sr. Secondary Ashram Schools
 - g. Teaching Learning Equipment (TLE)
 - h. Furniture in Ashram Schools
 - i. Lab equipment – only for Secondary / Sr. Secondary Ashram Schools

j. Facilities in Ashram Schools

- i. Textbooks for children studying in Sec/Sr. Sec. (Elementary level to be sourced from SSA)
- ii. School uniform children studying in Sec/Sr. Sec (Elementary level to be sourced from SSA)
- iii. Notebooks, Pencils, Crayons, Other Classroom Accessories and School Bag
- iv. Sports and games equipment
- v. Regular Health Check-up
- vi. Counseling for Secondary and Sr. Secondary level students
- vii. Vocational education
- viii. Repair of existing Ashram Schools
- ix. Ashram School Building Maintenance Grant

II. Hostels established/ sanctioned with financial support from MoTA

- a. New 100 seater hostels building in TSP areas not covered by other residential schools/ hostels.
- b. Completion of existing hostels
- c. Repair of existing hostels
- d. Hostel Building Maintenance Grant

III. Quality interventions for Ashram schools in Tribal areas

- a. Teacher training in tribal language
- b. Incentive to teachers to learn tribal language
- c. School Leadership Development
- d. Innovation funds for quality initiatives
- e. Support for quality enhancement in Tribal schools
- f. Curriculum development through SCERT/SIE for Multi-Lingual Education (MLE)
- g. Support for Tribal Education Unit in SCERT/SIE

IV. Research and Management

- a. Research
- b. Management and Monitoring.

V. **Scholarships**

- a. Pre Matric Scholarship
- b. Post Matric Scholarship

The above interventions and revised funding pattern will definitely mitigate the problems now faced by the tribal children in continuing their education and the financial crunch experienced by the States to a large extent.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 8, Para No. 8)

2.5 **State proposals for setting of Ashram Schools:** The Committee note with concern that no funds were given to the states of Jharkhand, Karnataka and Maharashtra for construction of Ashram Schools during the last five years. The Committee also note that some of the State Governments, having sizeable tribal population, are not able to send viable and complete proposals for funds on time. The Ministry have also informed that they are unable to process many proposals since they are not complete in all respects and their viability have not been established by the States concerned. The Ministry conducts meetings periodically with various State Governments wherein guidance for sending complete and viable proposals under the scheme is given. Seriously concerned that the ST students are being deprived of the benefit of the scheme, the committee urge the Ministry to provide proper guidance to all the States including the States mentioned above so that the benefits of Ashram Schools are availed of by the ST Students of all the States. The Committee would also like the Ministry to incentivize the States so that they are encouraged to submit proposals for opening of new Ashram Schools.

Reply of the Government

2.6 Of late, many of the proposals for opening of new Ashram Schools in TSP area received from the States were not complete, not fulfilling the conditions for

opening of new Ashram Schools or the proposals were not sustainable/viable or received late etc. Hence, these proposals could not be approved. However from this year onwards the Ministry has streamlined the procedure of submitting the proposal through the newly introduced Annual Work Plan & Budget (AWP&B). The States will be provided adequate capacity building in the preparation of their proposals. While according sanctions for opening of new Ashram Schools, preference will be given to States which have a sizeable number of tribal children and have not provided Ashram Schools or the Ashram Schools already provided are not adequate. In this way the imbalance in opening of Ashram Schools will be addressed. With the revision of funding pattern, addition of more interventions like provision of teachers, non-teaching staff, TLE, etc while opening Ashram Schools the states will be incentivized and encouraged to submit proposals for opening of new Ashram Schools.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 10, Para No. 10)

2.7 **Inadequate Budgetary allocation for the scheme:** The Committee are dismayed to note that the budgetary allocation of Rs.75 crore for the scheme during 2012-13 was reduced to Rs.61.00 crore at Revised Estimate stage as the Ministry of Finance imposed an overall cut of Rs.990.00 crore in the budget of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Hence, the budget under the scheme Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas had to be reduced. The Committee are deeply concerned to note that as admitted by the Ministry, this reduction has adversely affected the sanctioning of Ashram Schools proposed by the States. Expressing their strong disapproval over the reduction of the budget estimate of such an important scheme, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should vigorously pursue with the Ministry of Finance/Planning Commission for restoring the budgetary allocation for the scheme and also desisting from affecting any cuts under the scheme during R.E. stage in future so that the sanctioning of Ashram Schools proposed by the States are not adversely affected. The Committee further recommend that the Ministry seek higher budgetary

allocations for the scheme in accordance with the proposals received from the States so to accelerate the literacy level of the tribals.

Reply of the Government

2.8 This Ministry had always sought higher budget allocations for the Scheme in accordance with the requirements to accelerate the literacy level of the tribals.

However, considering the overall financial crunch prevailing, the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance impose reduction in the budget allocations both at BE and RE stage. In 2013-14, the BE was Rs. 1272.19 crore and pegged at Rs. 1186.79 crore at RE stage. In 2014-15, the allocation at BE stage is Rs.1087.84 crore.

The recommendation of the Committee has been noted and this Ministry will continue to project higher budget allocation in future as well.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 11, Para No. 11)

2.9 **Number of ST children benefited:** The Committee observe that during 2010-11 and 2011-12 against the target of 3450 students benefited under the scheme, the achievements were 6025 and 10400 students respectively. During the year 2012-13, against the target of 3795 students, achievement was 3800 students. Taking note of the huge mismatch between the targets and achievements under the scheme, when achievements have constantly overshoot the targets for the last three years, the Committee conclude that the targets have been fixed without undertaking due exercise of assessing the number of seats likely to be created in States. The Committee, therefore, recommend to the Ministry to fix targets which are higher but realistic after ascertaining the progress in each State and strive to achieve the same within the stipulated period.

Reply of the Government

2.10 The target set is based upon the quantum of funds allocated under the scheme and the all India average cost of construction of a 100-seater ashram school. This often results in a steep variation between the stipulated target and the actual achievement because the rates of construction vary according to the different schedule of PWD rates in different parts of the country and the number of seats created could be more or less depending upon which part of the country the schools/hostels are sanctioned for. Also, all the seats to be created are counted towards achievement of target at the time of first sanction of funds. Subsequently when the second or third installments of funds for the same project are released over the next two years or so, the target achieved would not increase for those years because the creation of seats have already been taken into account at the time of first sanction. The target for 2010-11 and 2011-12 was based on the total allocation but the achievement were 6025 and 10400 which is the number of new seats to be created as a result of the new schools sanctioned. Funds in 2012-13 have also been disbursed to states as 2nd or 3rd installments and the seats to be created thereby have already been counted against the target for the year in which they were first sanctioned and the first instalment was released.

The recommendation of the Committee has been noted and such mismatch will be avoided in future.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 14, Para No. 14)

2.11 **Overcrowding in hostels:** The Committee are deeply dismayed and concerned over overcrowding in Ashram Schools and hostels. The Committee are saddened to note that the Ministry have not fixed norms for sharing of rooms by the students. The Ministry have maintained that they sanction the Ashram Schools based on the project layout plan duly certified by

State/Central PWD which *inter-alia* include number of seats, number of students to be accommodated in class, etc. Keeping in view the dangerous overcrowding of tribals students in schools and hostels, the Committee urge the Ministry to fix the norms for sharing of rooms by the students in Ashram Schools in consonance with RTE regulation and come out with a students friendly policy. The Committee further recommend that at Ashram Schools where students enrollment exceeds the seats availability, urgent steps be taken to open more schools in the area.

Reply of the Government

2.12 In the proposed Umbrella Scheme the norm for the Hostel building with a carpet area of approximately 80 sq.ft. per child with 50 children and 60 sq.ft. per child with 100 children or above has been fixed.

In order to avoid overcrowding in existing Ashram Schools and Hostels, the Umbrella Scheme also envisages provision of one additional class room in case of increase in enrolment for every 30 children up to 200 children and beyond that one class room for every 40 children in primary school, one additional class room for every 35 children in upper primary school and one additional class room for every 30 children in secondary and senior secondary school. In the case of additional intake of children in Hostels a carpet area of approximately 80 sq.ft. per child with 50 children and 60 sq.ft. per child with 100 children is also provided. Thus, on implementation of the Umbrella Scheme the overcrowding in Ashram Schools and Hostels can be mitigated.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 19, Para No. 19)

2.13 **HRD Report on STs :** The Committee observe that a Sub-Committee of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) was constituted under the Chairmanship of Prof. Thorat on educational requirements of STs. The Committee are dismayed to note that the findings of the above

Report are yet to be obtained from the Ministry of HRD. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to make available the findings of the Thorat Committee Report and implement its recommendations/suggestions for the better functioning of the Ashram Schools.

Reply of the Government

2.14 The findings, recommendations and suggestions of the report of Prof. Thorat Committee is being analysed and the same will be implemented in co-ordination with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD).

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para 1.22 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 20, Para No. 20)

2.15 **Evaluation of Ashram Schools:** The Committee were apprised that an evaluation study of the education – related schemes of the Ministry, including the scheme of “Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas” has been entrusted to National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad for their continuation in the 12th Five Year Plan and the draft evaluation report has been received by the Ministry. On the status of implementation of NIRD Report the Ministry replied that taking into account the study Report of NIRD and the recommendations even after detailed discussions of a Core Group formed in October, 2012, to delve into the issue of education for the Scheduled Tribe students, they have formulated an “Umbrella Scheme”, wherein some of the suggestions of NIRD has been incorporated. The Committee would like to know the implementation status of NIRD Report in the context of the new Umbrella Scheme.

Reply of the Government

2.16 Many of the recommendations of NIRD, except the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), have been incorporated in the proposed Umbrella Scheme. The Scheme will be implemented immediately on receipt of Cabinet approval.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 21, Para No. 21)

2.17 **Counseling on the career options to STs :** The Committee are of the considered opinion that outside agencies should be engaged for specialized counseling on the career options and the students should also be taken out on study visits to institutes of education like IIT, and IIMs, etc. for an enriching exposure to the academic/professional atmosphere so that they get motivated to set their respective goals and seriously endeavor to achieve them. The Committee also recommend introduction of vocational education in the Ashram Schools with a view to providing more professional and career oriented options to the students. Taking note of the innate bravery and sense of fearlessness of the tribal children, the Committee recommend that physical exercise and physical training should be imparted regularly in the Ashram Schools so that they can be groomed to join the Defence Forces and also make their distinct mark in the field of sports.

Reply of the Government

2.18 The proposed Umbrella Scheme provides the engagement of an Education, Career and Vocational (ECV) Counsellor in Ashram schools having Secondary or Sr. Secondary level.

The ECV Counsellor will work with ST students at the secondary and higher secondary stage in Ashram Schools and other pre-matric and post-matric hostels located in the TSP areas on the following:

- (a) At the secondary and senior secondary level, enabling the student to identify a general career area, and selecting and applying to colleges/ professional institutions
- (b) Referring students to additional training
- (c) Connecting students with job leads and coaching them on interviewing skills, where necessary
- (d) At the post-secondary level, the Counsellor will help students in selecting and applying to advanced degree programmes such as Master's or doctoral level, or help them prepare for job searches.

The proposed Umbrella Scheme also provides innovation funds at State level. The funds needed for taking out students on study visits to educational institutes like IITs, IIMs, etc. for an enriching exposure to the academic/professional atmosphere so that they get motivated to set their respective goals and seriously endeavor to achieve them can be sourced from the innovative fund.

Under the proposed Umbrella Scheme, provision for Work Education in Upper Primary classes and Vocational Education at Secondary and Senior classes has been made and the same will cover all Ashram Schools in the country. The Schools will be provided with Part-time instructors, vocational trainers and materials and equipment necessary to impart vocational training to children. These Part-time instructors will inter-alia provide health and physical education to children studying in Ashram Schools.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

CHAPTER III

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

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CHAPTER IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED AND HAVE BEEN COMMENTED UPON IN CHAPTER-I

Recommendation (Sl. No. 3, Para No. 3)

4.1 **Need for Ashram School data, State-wise:** The Committee note that Ashram School in tribal areas run by State Governments across the country are playing a crucial role in imparting elementary education to tribal students. As informed by the Ministry, the concerned State Governments/UT administrations are responsible for general functioning of schools including teachers' recruitment, students, enrollment, syllabus, affiliation to education board, management of dropout rate, etc. The Committee have, however, been informed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development that with the notification of RTE Act, Ashram Schools also come under its purview and have to follow the prescribed norms of standards. The Committee are, however, constrained to note that neither the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) nor the Ministry of Tribal Affairs have the information about the number of Schools functioning in various States. The Committee therefore, feel that with the promulgation of RTE Act, it has become incumbent on both the Central and State Governments to collect data state-wise about the number of tribal schools and to ensure observance of prescribed norms for the Ashram Schools. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should closely watch and review the prescribed norms of standards being followed by the States for Ashram Schools, collect and maintain year-wise and state-wise data on Ashram Schools and, in case of any shortcomings, exhort the concerned states to take necessary corrective action.

Reply of the Government

4.2 The Ashram Schools up to the elementary level opened with financial support from this Ministry and State Governments/UT Administrations are Government Schools and come under the purview of RTE Act 2009. Therefore, these Ashram Schools need to ensure observance of the prescribed RTE norms.

This Ministry was formed in 1999 after the bifurcation of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The data on Ashram Schools sanctioned prior to this date was not available. However, This Ministry has now collected the information from States and based on the available data the State-wise No. of Ashram Schools opened with support from this Ministry and State Government is given below.

State/UT	No. of Ashram Schools		
	MoTA supported	State supported	Total
A & N Islands	NA	NA	NA
Andhra Pradesh	246	336	582
Assam	1	NA	1
Bihar	0	5	5
Chhattisgarh	351	122	473
D&D	NA	NA	NA
D&NH	NA	NA	NA
Goa	1	0	1
Gujarat	164	0	164
Himachal Pradesh	24	0	24
Jammu & Kashmir	NA	NA	NA
Jharkhand	2	NA	2
Karnataka	19	5	24
Kerala	11	NA	11
Maharashtra	254	298	552
Manipur	0	5	5
Meghalaya	NA	NA	NA
Mizoram	NA	NA	NA
Madhya Pradesh	414	254	668
Nagaland	NA	NA	NA
Odisha	97	255	352
Rajasthan	9	0	9
Sikkim	8	0	8
Tamil Nadu	NA	NA	NA
Tripura	25	4	29
Uttar Pradesh	2	NA	2
Uttarakhand	12	NA	12
WB	NA	NA	NA
Total	1640	1284	2924

The data from the States shown with NA are still awaited. These States will be requested to furnish the information, so that the complete data on Ashram Schools will be available with this Ministry.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para 1.7 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 5, Para No. 5)

4.3 **Proposal for Construction of Ashram Schools:** The Committee regret to note that the Ministry was unable to furnish the number of proposals received by them for setting up of Ashram Schools across the States and Union Territories during the last three years and the proposal approved/pending as on date, State-wise. The Committee do not accept the plea of the Ministry that the receipt of proposal from States/UT Administrations in Tribal Sub Plan Areas is a continuous and ongoing process and Central Assistance is released to the States/UTs based on the proposals, complete in all respects, received from them and are subject to availability of funds in a particular financial year. In order to bring greater transparency and efficiency, the Committee recommend that the Ministry furnish a detailed statement on the number of proposals received, rejected, approval and those pending, with reasons therefore, State-wise during the last three years. This may be done within three months of the presentation of this Report.

Reply of the Government

4.4 A detailed statement on the number of proposal for opening of Ashram Schools in TSP areas received, rejected, approved and those pending with

reasons therefore, State-wise during the last three years from 2010-11 to 2012-13 is being prepared and will be submitted within the stipulated period.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para 1.10 of Chapter-I of the Report)

CHAPTER V

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE INTERIM IN NATURE

Recommendation (Sl. No. 2, Para No. 2)

5.1 **Need for concerted and collaborative efforts by all stakeholder:** The Committee note that Ministry of Human Resource Development is mandated to promote literacy among all groups including the tribals. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs which is the nodal Ministry for welfare of STs only supplements the efforts of Ministry of Human Resource Development through gap filling programmes. However, the State Governments which are responsible for running the educational institutions for STs have a major role to play in effective implementation of the schemes. The Committee are, therefore of the considered view that only by concerted and collaborative efforts of the two Ministries, the State Governments and the NGOs, the desired results can be achieved to enhance the literacy rate among the STs. The Committee, therefore, recommend that an integrated plan of action for bringing STs at par with other groups in educational development with effective coordination mechanism of the various stake holders be prepared and put into implementation so as to achieve desired results in a definite time frame. The Committee would like that the State Governments to report to union Government on the progress achieved in this regard every six months so that these can be assessed and corrective steps can be taken.

Reply of the Government

5.2 Ministry of Human Resource Development is mandated to promote literacy among all groups including the tribals through SSA and RMSA Schemes and the effort in this Ministry is in consolidating and improving the quality of Ashram Schools, Hostels and filling the critical gap in improving the quality of education of tribal children. The Umbrella Scheme of this Ministry has been designed very creatively to effect greater synergy and convergence across

various programmes run by the line Ministry and State Governments to bring in optimal use of funds, holistic planning, efficiencies in management and better monitoring and supervision to ensure financial discipline.

The observations and recommendations of the Committee will be shared with Ministry of Human Resource Development and State Governments for taking concerted and collaborative efforts to enhance the literacy rate among the STs. An integrated plan of action for bringing STs at par with other groups in education development with effective coordination mechanism of the various stake holders will be prepared and put into implementation so as to achieve desired result in a definite time frame. A six monthly report from the States will also be introduced to report the progress achieved in this regard.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 4, Para No. 4)

5.3 Central scheme on 'Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas': The Committee observe that to supplement the effort of State Governments, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been implementing a scheme 'Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas'. The Scheme is in operation since 1990-91 and has been revised with effect from financial year 2008-09. Twenty two States and Two Union Territories has been identified as Tribal Sub Plan Areas for implementing the Scheme. However, the Committee are concerned to note that though the scheme is in operation for the last 20 years, so far only 862 Ashram Schools have been sanctioned in 14 States i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Goa, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tripura, Utrkhand and Uttar Pradesh. Further, in some States viz. Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Chhattisgarh as many as 242, 164 and 134 schools have been sanctioned whereas in States like Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Rajashthan and Jharkhand which have very low literacy rates among the STs as compared to the national average, only 78,82,9 and 2 schools have been sanctioned respectively. In West

Bengal and Tamil Nadu, no schools have been sanctioned so far. The Committee are not happy with the reply of the Ministry that the scheme is need based, demand driven and Ashram Schools are sanctioned based on the demand of the States/UT Administrations. The Committee are apprehensive that there might be some underlying reasons for which these States, in spite of having very large ST population, are reluctant and not showing any interest in opening of Ashram Schools. The Committee are disturbed that even after launching of the scheme for more than two decades, it has not been implemented in all the TSP areas thereby depriving the ST students of the benefits of the scheme only because States Governments/ UTs were not able to send demands for setting up of Ashram Schools. The Committee recommend that earnest efforts should be made by the Ministry to sensitize and motivate all the States/UTs to send proposals for setting up of Ashram Schools by undertaking a special drive and chalking out a proactive action plan so that the scheme is implemented in all the States/UTs identified as Tribal-sub Plan areas. The Committee further desire that the Ministry in coordination with State Governments should identify ST areas with low literacy rate and take proactive steps to sanction Ashram Schools for these areas.

Reply of the Government

5.4 The need for setting up of Ashram Schools by undertaking a special drive in TSP areas particularly ST areas with low literacy rate is being taken up with the States on priority. The States which have large ST population and not opened any Ashram Schools so far or inadequate number of Ashram Schools to cater to the needs of tribal children will be requested to identify such areas for opening of new Ashram Schools and based on the need, opening of new Ashram Schools will be sanctioned, according top priority to such areas.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 6, Para No. 6)

5.5 **Delay in construction of Ashram Schools:** The Committee note that out of 862 Ashram Schools, 246 are yet to be constructed even after the stipulated period of two years. The reasons cited for the same were difficulty in finding contractors, vast spread of the tribal regions and shifting of location mainly in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts. Keeping in view the fact that delay in construction works is leading to high escalation in costs, beside depriving the tribal students of the benefits, the Committee recommend that the Government in coordination with State Government make concerted efforts to effectively address the difficulties cited above including giving more flexibility to State Governments wherever required for constructing the remaining 246 Ashram Schools and to make them functional in a time bound manner. The Committee also recommend that there should be proper mechanism for monitoring of the construction of Ashram Schools in close coordination with the State Government concerned.

Reply of the Government

5.6 The status of progress of construction of Ashram Schools supported by this Ministry is being obtained from the concerned States. The reasons for the delay in completing the construction and the difficulties, if any, will also be ascertained from the States. This Ministry in coordination with the State Governments will make concerted efforts to address the difficulties with a view to complete the construction and make the Ashram Schools functional in a time bound manner. This Ministry has now introduced a system of quarterly monitoring of the progress of construction of Ashram Schools and the delay in completion of the Ashram Schools will be brought to the notice of higher authorities at State level to take suitable remedial measures.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 9, Para No. 9)

5.7 **Umbrella Scheme for education of ST children:** The Committee observe that Grant-in-aid under the scheme is released only for construction of school buildings and the maintenance and running of the Ashram Schools is the responsibility of the State Government/UT Administration concerned. The Committee also observe that during the course of periodic review meetings held with Secretaries/Commissioners of the Tribal Welfare Departments of State Government/UT Administrations it has come to notice that States face problems in maintaining and running of the Ashram Schools for want of sufficient funds. The Ministry have also informed that with a view to addressing this problem, among other things, the ministry had proposed an umbrella Scheme for the education of Scheduled Tribes children for 12th Plan period through which more funds are proposed to be made available to the States/Union Territories for suitably upgrading the Ashram Schools and bringing about quality change in their functioning. The committee note that under the proposed Umbrella Scheme, Rs. 5935.18 crore has been projected as Central share for the 12th plan period. On the status of the approval of the Umbrella Scheme, the Ministry apprised the Committee that the Planning Commission has supported the proposal and the EFC memorandum was being revised in the light of comments of various Ministries/Departments after which proposal for convening EFC meeting will be sent to the Departments of Expenditure. The Committee urge the Ministry to get the scheme approved without loss of further time so that the Umbrella Scheme can be implemented during the current fiscal itself to strengthen the States financially as well as to ensure smooth running and maintenance of Ashram Schools.

Reply of the Government

5.8 The EFC approval for the proposed Umbrella Scheme has been obtained. Since the total amount available for the XII Plan under the budget provision for the Scheme to be merged was Rs.5071.86 crore, the revised outlay for the

Scheme has been restricted to the total amount available in XII Plan Budget of Rs.5071.86 crore.

The Cabinet approval for the Umbrella Scheme will be obtained immediately after the removal of Model Code of Conduct.

However, the proposal for the AWP&B for 2014-15 will be obtained from the States well in advance, so that the Scheme can be implemented during the current fiscal itself.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para 1.13 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 12, Para No. 12)

5.9 **Need for supplying quality food:** During their Study visits, it was brought to the notice of the Committee that sub-standard food was being provided to the students in some of the Ashram Schools and that personal care products of inferior quality were being provided to the students. Though, the Principal Secretary, Tribal Welfare Department, Maharashtra assured the Committee that he would look into the matter, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should impress upon all the State Governments to take such complaints seriously and conduct appropriate enquiries in this regard. Also, keeping in view the sub-standard food and bad quality of personal care products being provided to the students in Ashram Schools, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should ensure strict compliance of the standards laid down the Right to Education Act.

Reply of the Government

5.10 The States are being requested to provide good food and quality personal care products to Tribal children in Ashram Schools and Hostels. The States will be impressed to deal with complaints seriously and conduct appropriate enquiries regarding supply of substandard food and other personal care products of inferior quality.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para 1.16 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 13, Para No. 13)

5.11 **Death of ST children in Ashram Schools:** The Committee were shocked to note during the Study Visit that 793 children died in Ashram Schools in Maharashtra from the year 2001-2002 to 2012-2013 due to snake bites, scorpion bites, fever and minor illness. The Committee were apprised that the State Government conducted a total of 609 primary enquiries and as a result thereof, 74 employees were suspended, departmental enquiry initiated against 28 employees, show cause notice were issued to 39 employees and 99 were given Memorandum, warning, etc. The Committee also note that 453 parents were given ex-gratia payment while 340 parents are yet to be disbursed the ex-gratia amount. The Committee are not satisfied with the action as it is a clear case of criminal neglect on the part of schools' authorities in not ensuring timely treatment for the tribal children which could have saved their precious lives. The Committee, therefore, recommend that (a) the Ministry call for detailed report from all the States concerned in this regard and that necessary corrective and punitive measures are taken; (b) all possible steps, including periodical health check-up of students and making adequate arrangements for first-aid facilities in

each Ashram Schools, should be taken to prevent recurrence of such incidents; (c) the teachers and staff residing in the school campus should be trained to administer first aid for snake/scorpion bites in areas infested with them so as to prevent deaths on this count; and (d) ex-gratia payment may be disbursed to the remaining families expeditiously.

Reply of the Government

5.12 Necessary guidelines are being issued to all States for prevention of such incidences and all States are being requested to furnish a detailed report on the death of tribal children in Ashram Schools as recommended by the Committee.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para 1.19 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 15, Para No. 15)

5.13 **Security in Ashram Schools:** The Committee note that the running and maintenance including security arrangement for students studying in Ashram Schools, especially in the Naxal Affected areas of the Ashram Schools, is the responsibility of the State Governments. In the considered view of the Committee, a teacher/warden must stay in the school campus for ensuring efficient running of the schools and the safety of the children. The Committee also recommend that the officials working as Hostel Superintendents should be imparted special training and properly sensitized so that they can deal with various exigencies, including security related issues, in running of the Ashram Schools and can contact the civil and police authorities at the time of need. The police officials should pay special attention to these schools including periodic patrolling of school premises and surrounding areas.

Reply of the Government

5.14 The recommendation of the Committee is being shared with all States for strict compliance.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 16, Para No. 16)

5.15 **Appointment of teachers in Ashrams Schools:** The Committee observe that teachers' recruitment, students' enrolment, syllabus, affiliation to the Education Board, student attendance and general functioning of the schools fall under the domain of State Governments/UT Administration. On the issuance of guidelines for selection of teachers, the Ministry stated that the proposed Umbrella scheme provides for salary of additional teachers to be recruited, teachers training, incentive to teachers for learning tribal language, training in School leadership, access to day scholars, upgradation of existing Ashram Schools, regular health check up of students in coordination with National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), etc. Besides, the Umbrella Scheme also provides for assistance to the State Council of Education Research and Training (SCERT)/ State Institute of Education (SIE) to strengthen their curricular development unit to make them more relevant to the changing world. The Committee further observe that in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for education of STs, emphasis has been given to development of education material and teaching in local languages. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the tribal teachers especially from the same community be appointed in ashram Schools and ST youths be encouraged to take up teaching in Ashram Schools. The Committee also recommend that special training should be imparted to non-tribal teachers for working in tribal areas, including knowledge of tribal language and the teachers must be sensitized to the cultural and behavioral pattern of tribal children and motivated to render efficient service to Ashram Schools. The Committee also desire that suitable atmosphere should be created in Ashram Schools for enhancing the self

esteem and confidence of the tribal students, making them feel comfortable in the schools setting.

Reply of the Government

5.16 The recommendation of the Committee is being shared with all States for strict compliance.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 17, Para No. 17)

5.17 **Dropouts from Ashram Schools:** The Committee observe that as per independent sample survey conducted by Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) International, New Delhi in 2009, the dropout rates of ST children, both in the elementary and secondary levels are quite high as compared to other categories of students. The Committee have also been informed that while 55% of the enrolled children dropout at the elementary level this figure stands at 71% at the secondary grades in 10 year schooling cycle. This is about 15% more compared to the dropout rates among the SC category children and 22% more than the overall school going children. Responding to the anxiety of the Committee, the Ministry have informed that the Ministry of Human Resource Development have indentified more than 100 Districts as Special Focus Districts (SFDs) with ST population of more than 25%, taking various steps to reduce dropout rate among Scheduled Tribes. Besides, though small, various education related schemes of the Ministry are also targeted towards filling of critical gap to further reduce the dropout rate of ST students. In addition to this, schemes like Construction of Ashram Schools, Hostels and various Scholarships are helping in improvement of retention of ST students. The Committee, while appreciation the above initiatives, are of the considered view that the major reason for higher dropout rate in Ashram Schools is that in most of the States the medium of instruction is English, Hindi or regional language and most of tribal children do not understand the textbooks. The Committee are of the considered view that there is an urgent need to develop textbooks in the mother tongue for the

children at the beginning when they do not understand the regional languages. The Committee, therefore, recommend that ST children should be taught in their own language at the beginning of the primary education cycle with provision to switchover to regional languages and English/Hindi in due course. The Committee hope that these steps would certainly help in reducing the dropout rate amongst the tribal students.

Reply of the Government

5.18 Section 29(2)(f) of the RTE Act 2009 provides that medium of instructions shall, as far as possible, be in child's mother tongue at elementary level.

The recommendation of the Committee is being shared with all States for strict compliance.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 18, Para No. 18)

5.19 **Monitoring of Ashram Schools :** The Committee were apprised that the Ashram School scheme is being monitored by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs by calling for physical and financial progress reports from the State Government and also through periodic meetings with State/UT Governments officials. However, the Committee are dismayed to note that due to acute shortage of staff, the visits could not be undertaken at frequent intervals. The Committee are at a loss to comprehend as to how in the absence of any field visits by the officials of the Ministry, the projects and the schemes are being monitored. The Committee recommend that the Ministry should approach the Ministry of Finance/DOPT for creation of adequate posts so that the Ministry of Tribal Affairs is able to discharge the assigned mandate efficiently. The Committee further desire that the State Governments should be exhorted to involve village Panchayats/local community/representatives of parents in monitoring the working of Ashram Schools.

Reply of the Government

5.20 In the Umbrella Scheme additional posts for setting up a Project Management Cell (PMC) at National level has been provided. Accordingly, the additional post of one Joint Secretary, one Director, one Deputy Secretary, one Under Secretary, one Section Officer, one Assistant and three consultants will be provided. This will enable the Ministry to undertake adequate field visits to carry out the monitoring of Ashram Schools.

All States are being requested to exhort to involve village Panchayats/local community/representatives of parents in monitoring the working of Ashram Schools.

[Ministry of Tribal Affairs' O.M. No.17014/ 01 /2014- Education dated 19th May, 2014]

New Delhi;
10 March, 2015
19 Phalgun, 1936 (Saka)

RAMESH BAIS,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Social
Justice and Empowerment.

ANNEXURE - I

MINUTES OF THE FIFTEENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT HELD ON TUESDAY, 10TH MARCH, 2015.

The Committee met from 1500 hrs. to 1530 hrs. in Committee Room No. 139, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

SHRI RAMESH BAIS - CHAIRMAN

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

6. Shri Jhina Hikaka
7. Shri Bhagwant Khuba
8. Shri Sadashiv Lokhande
9. Smt. Maragatham K.
10. Prof. A.S.R. Naik
11. Dr. Udit Raj
12. Prof. Sadhu Singh

RAJYA SABHA

13. Shri Ahamed Hassan
14. Smt. Vijila Sathyananth
15. Smt. Wansuk Syiem

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Ashok Kumar Singh - Joint Secretary
2. Shri Ashok Sajwan - Director
3. Shri Kushal Sarkar - Additional Director

2. At the outset, Hon'ble Chairman welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee and apprised them that the sitting had been convened to consider and adopt the Seventh Report of the Committee on Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Thirty-ninth Report of the Committee (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject "Implementation of schemes for Welfare of Senior Citizens" pertaining to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Social Justice and Empowerment), Eighth Report of the Committee on Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Forty-fifth Report of the Committee (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject "Review of the functioning of National Institutes working in the field of disability" pertaining to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities), Ninth Report of the Committee on Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Forty-fourth Report of the Committee (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject "Working of Ashram Schools in Tribal Areas" pertaining to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Tenth Report of the Committee on Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Forty-sixth Report of the Committee (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject "Implementation of Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme" pertaining to the Ministry of Minority Affairs.

3. Thereafter, the Committee considered and adopted the above Reports without modifications and authorized the Chairman to finalize these Reports and present the same to Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE FORTY-FOURTH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA)

		Total	Percentage
I.	Total number of Recommendations	21	
II.	Observations/Recommendations, which have been accepted by the Government (Paragraph Nos. 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 19, 20 and 21)	9	42.86
III.	Observations/Recommendations which the committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government (Nil)	Nil	0
IV.	Observations/Recommendations, in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted (Paragraph Nos. 3 and 5)	2	9.52
V.	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are interim in nature (Paragraph Nos. 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17 and 18)	10	47.62